

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A toy assembly, comprising:

a plurality of shell sections that join along at least one joint line to form a generally spherical body, said shell sections being symmetrically disposed around a central axis, wherein said spherical body is bisected by an imaginary equatorial plane that is perpendicular to said central axis, and wherein said at least one joint line is in a plane that is perpendicular to said equatorial plane;

a connector mechanism having two components that temporarily connect when brought into abutment, each of said components being disposed along said central axis on opposite sides of said spherical body;

wherein said shell sections are flexible and enable said spherical body to be compressed into a non-spherical shape so that said components of said connector mechanism abut and temporarily connect, said shell sections providing a spring bias that resists compression and causes said shell sections to return to a generally spherical shape when said components of said connector mechanism disconnect.

2. The assembly according to Claim 1, wherein each of said shell sections is identical in shape.
3. The assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said plurality of shell sections includes two generally hemispherical shell sections that join along a common joint line.
4. The assembly according to Claim 3, wherein each of said shell sections defines at least one slot, wherein said at least one slot is in a plane perpendicular to said equatorial plane.
5. The assembly according to Claim 1, further including two end hubs disposed on opposite ends of said spherical body along said central axis, wherein said end hubs engage each of said shell sections and help retain said shell sections to form said spherical body.
6. The assembly according to Claim 5, wherein said end hubs support said components of said connector mechanism within said spherical body.

7. The assembly according to Claim 1, wherein each of said shell sections is a unistructurally molded plastic piece.

8. The assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said components of said connector mechanism include a suction cup and a suction cup plate.

9. A method of forming a collapsible ball, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of flexible shell sections;

joining said shell sections along at least one joint line to form a spherical body having a central axis and a equatorial plane perpendicular to said central axis, wherein said at least one joint line extends in a plane perpendicular to said equatorial plane;

providing a connector mechanism within said spherical body that causes opposing internal areas of said spherical body to temporarily interconnect when said spherical body is compressed and said spherical body is deformed out of a spherical shape and said opposing internal areas are brought into abutment,

wherein said shell sections provide a spring bias that bias said spherical body into said spherical shape.

10. The method according to Claim 9, wherein said step of providing a plurality of shell sections include providing a plurality of shell sections that are identical in size and shape.

11. The method according to Claim 9, wherein each of said shell sections is formed with at least one slot that extends in a plane perpendicular to said equatorial plane.

12. The method according to Claim 9, wherein said step of providing a plurality of shell sections includes providing two generally hemispherical shell sections.

13. The method according to Claim 9, further including the step of providing end hubs that support said connector mechanism within said spherical body.

14. The method according to Claim 13, wherein said step of joining said shell sections along at least one joint line includes engaging each of said shell sections with said end hubs, wherein said end hubs hold said shell sections in an orientation to form said spherical body.

15. The method according to Claim 9, wherein each of said shell sections is a single piece of molded plastic.

16. A collapsible ball assembly, comprising:

a shell having a center axis that can be selectively configured between a spherical shape and a disc shape , said shell being comprised of a plurality of shell sections joined together along joint lines that are coplanar with said center axis, wherein said plurality of shell sections provide a spring bias that bias said shell into said spherical shape;

a connection mechanism within said shell that retains said shell in said disc shape against said spring bias of said plurality of shell sections

for a period of time after said shell is compressed from said spherical shape into said disc shape.

17. The collapsible ball assembly according to Claim 16, wherein each of said plurality of shell sections are identical in size and shape.

18. The collapsible ball assembly according to Claim 16, wherein said plurality of shell sections includes two hemispherical shell sections.

19. The collapsible ball assembly according to Claim 16, further including end hubs that engage and retain said plurality of shell sections to form said shell.

20. The collapsible ball assembly according to Claim 16, further including depressions formed in said plurality of shell sections to assist said plurality of shell sections to bend without creasing.